

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Bonnie Parsons, PVPC

**Organization:** Sturbridge Historical Commission

**Date (month / year):** March 2017

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

131-02422-008

Southbridge

STU.E

STU.219

**Town/City:** Sturbridge

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

**Address:** 8 Bates Hill

**Historic Name:** Simeon A. and Mary Drake House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** 1836

**Source:** Registry of Deeds

**Style/Form:** Federal

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: brick/wood shingle/masonry

Roof: asphalt

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Garage & enclosed vestibule added, 1980s; portico rebuilt unknown date; façade window enclosed unknown date.

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** .45 acres

**Setting:** Set facing south on a hillside that slopes down to the south. It is buffered from the roadside by rows of shrubbery.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

STURBRIDGE

8 BATES HILL

## MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The Simeon and Mary Drake House is an excellent example of a Federal style building and is one of the only examples of this style in Sturbridge built in masonry. The brick house is two-and-a-half stories under a side gable roof with two interior chimneys. The two chimneys were part of a plan that was initiated during the Federal period in order to have a center hallway. There is an added ventilator on the roof ridge between the two chimneys. The house is five bays wide and two bays deep. South-facing it has a center entry beneath an added wood portico on braces. The entry is narrow in Federal style and has a transom light above it. The section of the portico above the braces appears to have been more recently re-built in plywood. Windows in the house have granite sills and granite lintels and sash for the majority of them is 1/1 vinyl. On the façade at first story level, the easternmost window opening has been partially enclosed to allow for a smaller window sash to be inserted. Two windows in the gable field at attic level have aluminum 1/1 sash. The molded roof eaves make returns below a narrow rake board. On the north elevation of the house is a frame, 1-story ell followed by an attached two-car garage. In the angle between the ell and the house is a glassed-in vestibule, under a shed roof.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The Quinabaug Mills were Fiskdale's first industry and were started by Henry and Josiah Fiske in 1826. Henry Fiske lived in Sturbridge and built the first mill and workers' housing between 1826 and 1828. Their first mill began operation in 1829. This was the Quinabaug Company that went on to build a dam and a stone mill in 1834 as the company grew. When Henry retired in 1835 the mills had not been completed, so Josiah Fiske finished the work by merging the Quinabaug Company with the Sturbridge Cotton Mills with increased capital. The merged company known as the Sturbridge Cotton Mills had 200 looms and 10,000 spindles. Simeon A. Drake was the Quinabaug's agent from 1832-35, and then he went on to become the agent for the Sturbridge Cotton Company's agent from 1836-1854. Being agent was a prominent position in a mill as official representative of the owners in both internal and external company affairs. To that end, Drake was active in Sturbridge organizations and town government as the two offices went hand-in-hand in many respects.

The Drakes were also farmers. In 1850 they were cultivating 30 acres on a small dairy farm worth \$4,000. The Drakes had one horse, two cows, and two pigs. They raised corn, potatoes and hay and made 100 lbs. of butter. Simeon Drake's activities in town affairs spanned both his occupations. In 1843 he became the first chairman of the Second Agricultural Society of Sturbridge. He was also a town selectman in 1847 and 1848 and town moderator in 1851 and 1861. By 1857 Drake also owned a second house at the northwest corner of Main Street and Bates Hill Road, 528 Main Street. But typhoid fever hit Sturbridge in 1863 and Simeon died of it. Mary Drake continued to own both houses through 1870.

Simeon and Mary's daughter Carrie sold the property in 1877 to Benjamin Lincoln, a Holyoke resident and leather belt manufacturer. The Lincolns continued to live in Holyoke, so this was apparently an investment. Lincoln held on to the house until 1882 likely renting it before selling it to farmers Elias and Caroline Gifford. The Giffords farmed until 1902. The property changed hands quickly in 1902-1903 when William and Agnes Kirby bought it from the Giffords as an investment and turned around and sold it to Caroline St. John. William Kirby was a Sturbridge druggist and Nelson St. John, a French Canadian immigrant, and Caroline St. John were farmers, so the property was maintained as their home while they farmed land here and perhaps elsewhere in Sturbridge as well. Typical for mill towns in the early 1900s, their teenaged children, Freddie and Carrie, worked in the mills. Freddie worked as a folder and Carrie as a weaver at the Sturbridge Cotton Mill.

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By 1930 Joseph and Mary Jacques owned the house sharing it with Joseph's father and brother and their 7 year old son Joseph, Jr. By this date the property had divided off the farmland and the farmhouse had become home to Sturbridge industry workers. Joseph Jacques worked in a steel mill; Mary worked as a stenographer in a finishing mill. Joseph's brother Herman worked in a finishing mill as a laborer and his father at 75 years of age in an auger works. Joseph Jacques died in 1966 and Mary remained in the house until 1970, the longest resident since its construction.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

### Maps

Bailey, O. H. & Co. Bird's eye view *Sturbridge and Fiskdale*, Massachusetts, 1892.

Beers, F. W. *Plan of Towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, 1870.

Walling, H. F. *Map of Worcester County*, Wm. E. Baker, Boston, 1857.

### Primary Sources

Chase, Nelly M. *Photograph Album*, Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge.

### Secondary Sources

Burns, Brian. *Sturbridge: A Pictorial History*, Norfolk, 1988.

Clark, Joseph. *Historical Sketch of Sturbridge, Massachusetts*, Brookfield, Massachusetts, 1838.

Corey, Charles F. "Old Houses in Sturbridge" Quinebaug Historical Society Leaflets, vol.1, no. 5, 1900.

Davis, George. *A Historical Sketch of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, West Brookfield, 1856.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Worcester County, Massachusetts*, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1889.

Izard, Holly. *Old Houses of Sturbridge*, scrapbook, n.d., Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge.

### Digital Resources

[www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) for federal censuses 1790-1940 and Massachusetts State Censuses 1855, 1865.

<https://dp.la/> Digital Public Library of America

[www.masslandrecords.com](http://www.masslandrecords.com) for deeds